

REMARKS

Summary

The rejected claims have been canceled or amended to include features from an allowable dependent claim. Therefore, the application is now in allowable form.

Status of the claims

Claims 1, 3, 11-13, and 19-23, 26, 28, and 29 are pending. Claims 4, 7-10, 24, 25 and 27 have been canceled without prejudice. Claim 1 was amended to overcome a substantive rejection. Claims 1, 11, 13 and 19-23 are independent.

Requested action

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the outstanding objection and rejection in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

In addition, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner enter this Amendment, because Applicant has merely canceled rejected claims or amended a rejected claim to include features of an allowable dependent claim, thereby raising no new issues and placing the application in condition for allowance.

Allowable subject matter

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the allowance of Claims 11-13, 19-23, 26, 28, and 29 and the indication that Claim 4 contains allowable subject matter and would be allowed if

redrafted in independent form. In response, Applicant has amended Claim 1 to include the features of allowable Claim 4 and has canceled allowable Claim 4.

Claim objection

Claim 10 is objected to for a minor informality at lines 16 and 17. In response, while not conceding the propriety of the objection, Claim 10 has been canceled without prejudice, thereby rendering this objection moot.

Substantive claim rejections

Claims 1, 3, and 7-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,394,023 (Crocker). Claims 24, 25, and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Japanese Patent No. 11-006809 (Matsushita).

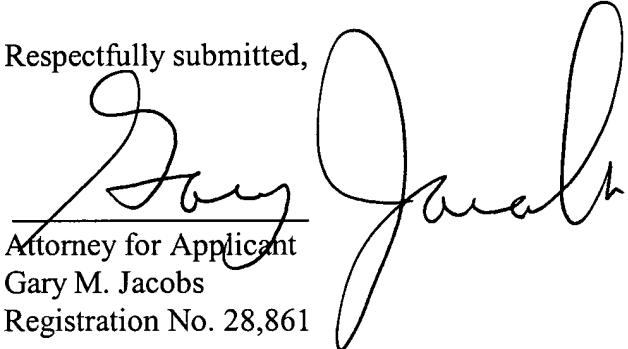
In response, while not conceding the propriety of the rejection, and solely to advance prosecution, Applicant has canceled Claims 7-10, 24, 25, and 27, and amended Claim 1 to include the features of allowable Claim 4, thereby rendering the rejections moot.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the claims are now in allowable form and entry of this Amendment is considered proper. Therefore, early passage to issue is respectfully solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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